



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES FLEET FORCES COMMAND
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NORFOLK VA 23551-2487

13-0030-DOD

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Ser 46/047
November 8, 2016

Dennis McLerran
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, Ste 900
Seattle, WA 98101

RECEIVED ON:

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EPA Region 10

Office of the Regional Administrator

Dear Mr. McLerran:

SUBJECT: UNITED STATES NAVY'S DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR EA-18G GROWLER AIRFIELD OPERATIONS AT THE NAVAL AIR
STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND COMPLEX

The Department of the Navy announces the public release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for EA-18G Growler Airfield Operations at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island complex. This document analyzes the potential environmental effects that may result from the addition of up to 36 Growler aircraft at the NAS Whidbey Island complex, including Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field Coupeville. This document and related project information are available on the project website at: www.whidbeyeis.com.

The Navy is holding five open house public meetings to provide members of the public with the opportunity to review project-related information and ask questions of Navy representatives. Comments may be submitted in person by attending a public meeting, or by forwarding written comments by mail or using the project website. All comments must be postmarked or received online by January 25, 2017. The enclosure provides more detailed information on the public meetings and methods for submitting comments.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Nashold
Director, Fleet Installations and Environment
and Deputy Chief of Staff

Enclosure. U.S. DON Draft EIS FOR EA-18 Growler Airfield Operations at the NAS Whidbey Island Complex



United States Department of the Navy Draft Environmental Impact Statement for EA-18G Growler Airfield Operations at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Complex

Introduction

The U.S. Department of the Navy (the Navy) has prepared and released to the public a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects that may result from the addition of up to 36 Growler aircraft at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island complex, including Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field Coupeville, Whidbey Island, Washington.

This document and related project information are available for your review on the project website at: www.whidbeyeis.com. A CD-ROM of the Draft EIS can be sent to you on request.

Project Overview

The Navy has prepared the EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations and Navy regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act. The Proposed Action would:

- continue and expand existing Growler operations at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island complex, which includes field carrier landing practice by Growler aircraft that occurs at Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field Coupeville
- increase electronic attack capabilities by adding 35 or 36 aircraft to support an expanded U.S. Department of Defense mission for identifying, tracking, and targeting in a complex electronic warfare environment
- construct and renovate facilities at Ault Field to accommodate additional Growler aircraft
- station additional personnel and their family members at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island complex and in the surrounding community

The EIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with a No Action Alternative (per Council on Environmental Quality regulations) and three action alternatives. The three action alternatives consider options for increasing the number of additional Growler aircraft, as appropriated by Congress, at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island complex. Each action alternative contains further analysis of three operational scenarios that involve different distributions of annual field carrier landing practice airfield operations between Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field Coupeville. Each action alternative evaluates the effects resulting from each of these three operational scenarios. The EIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the following resource areas: airspace, noise, safety, air quality, land use, cultural resources, American Indian traditional resources, biological resources, water resources,

socioeconomics, environmental justice, transportation, infrastructure, geological resources, hazardous materials and wastes, climate change and greenhouse gases, as well as the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action and other local projects.

Following public comment on the Draft EIS, the Navy will prepare the Final EIS. When completed, the Final EIS will be published and a Record of Decision will be issued outlining the Navy's decision. The Navy anticipates issuing a completed Final EIS sometime in 2017. Personnel and aircraft would arrive incrementally, as aircraft are delivered by the manufacturer, personnel are trained, and families relocate to the area, until the action is complete.

Public Involvement

Public input is important in order for the Navy to fully understand community concerns and relevant issues regarding the proposed action. Therefore, the Navy is offering an **extended 75-day public review and comment period** that begins on November 10, 2016 and ends on **January 25, 2017**.

All public comments received will become part of the public record on the Draft EIS and will be addressed in the Final EIS. All comments must be postmarked or received online by January 25, 2017.

U.S. Fleet Forces

Environmental Public Affairs Officer, Mr. Ted Braun

- 757-836-4427 or x4421 general office
- 757-416-2056 after hrs

or

NAS Whidbey Island Public Affairs officer

- Mike Welding 360-257-2962

Commander, US Fleet Force Command
Fleet Public Affairs

Norfolk, VA

Quarterdeck 757-836-3644

- Admin/Personnel 757-836-3802

Fleet web Support Dept 757-836-3819

Public Meetings

The Navy is holding five open-house public meetings to provide members of the public with the opportunity to review project-related information, ask questions of Navy representatives, and submit comments on the Draft EIS. Each of the meetings will be informal and consist of information stations staffed by Navy representatives. Members of the public are invited to attend the open-house public meetings on one of the following dates, times, and locations:

Meeting Dates/Times	Meeting Locations
Monday, December 5, 2016 3PM – 6PM	Port Townsend, Washington Fort Worden State Park Conference Center USO Hall 200 Battery Way Port Townsend, WA 98368
Tuesday, December 6, 2016 4PM – 7PM	Oak Harbor, Washington Oak Harbor Elk's Lodge Grande Hall 155 NE Ernst Street Oak Harbor, WA 98277
Wednesday, December 7, 2016 3PM – 6PM	Lopez Island, Washington Lopez Center for Community and the Arts 204 Village Road Lopez Island, WA 98261
Thursday, December 8, 2016 3PM – 6PM	Anacortes, Washington Seafarers' Memorial Park Building 601 Seafarers' Way Anacortes, WA 98221
Friday, December 9, 2016 4PM – 7PM	Coupeville, Washington Coupeville High School Commons 501 South Main Street Coupeville, WA 98239

Additional information about the EIS can be found on the project website at: www.whidbeyeis.com. The project website includes up-to-date information on the project and schedule, as well as related documents associated with the EIS.

Methods to Submit Comments

There are FOUR ways to provide comments:

- Attend a public meeting and place your written comments in the comment box
- Attend a public meeting and speak with a stenographer, who will transcribe your comments
- Submit your written comments using the project website at www.whidbeyeis.com
- Submit your written comments by mail to the following mailing address:
EA-18G EIS Project Manager, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC)
Atlantic, Attn: Code EV21/SS, 6506 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23508

All comments must be postmarked or received online by January 25, 2017.